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BY

ISRAEL COHEN, B.A.

Author of "Jewish Life in Modern Times,"
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ANTI-SEMITISM IN GERMANY.

THE most sinister phenomenon in the history of modern Jewry is the hostile movement generally known by the name of Anti-Semitism. The Jews have, throughout their dispersion, been exposed to a succession of attacks on the part of the States or the peoples in whose midst they dwelt, but from the last quarter of the nineteenth century these attacks assumed a new form and were, therefore, distinguished by a new name. In former ages, the prejudice against the Jew was based upon his religion and disappeared when he abandoned the faith of his fathers. In modern times it has developed into something wider and deeper. The prejudice is directed against the Jews as a race and manifests itself in all phases of human activity. It seeks its justification in all that the Jews may say, do, or think ; it feeds upon popular superstitions, exploded myths, and uncontrollable rumours ; and it expresses itself in a variety of acts of intolerance suggestive of the age of mediæval barbarism. Anti-Semitism knows of no redeeming quality in the Jew. It regards him as a perennial source of evil and danger to the State, and demands his expulsion or his extermination.

The " spiritual home " of this fanatical movement is Germany, whence it has penetrated to other countries ; and a brief survey of the course it has run in Germany since the establishment of

the Empire will show what indignity, suffering, and injustice the Jews have had to endure in a land that never ceases to boast of its *Kultur*.

Anti-Semitism began to manifest itself against the Jews in Germany very soon after the victorious campaign against France, although they bore their full share in the efforts of the Fatherland. The movement against the Jews arose from a variety of motives, and the multiplicity of its origin largely contributed to its strength and bitterness. In the first place, the State was engaged in a stubborn fight against the Catholic Church, which sought to increase its authority; and as the leaders of the latter body were unable to make any headway in the struggle they represented the *Kulturkampf* as a war of Jewry against Christendom, as an onslaught on the part of the "alien" Jewish element against Germanism.

The Catholic organs, especially the *Germania* and the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, indulged in the most unbridled abuse of the Jews. The former demanded that all the offences of individual Jews should be carefully recorded, so that they might be attributed to the whole of Jewry, and also that the Jews should be boycotted. The Catholics were soon joined in their unholy warfare by the Protestants, and having succeeded in making the Jews appear as the enemies of the State and society, they were content to leave the leadership to the sister-Church.

This religious attack was soon reinforced by assaults from the commercial, political, and even

scientific domains. The material prosperity that followed the conclusion of the Franco-German war led to the formation of hosts of companies, and a great deal of reckless speculation. Despite repeated warnings, especially the exposures in the Reichstag by the leading Jewish politicians, Lasker and Bamberger, the riot of commercial gambling continued until, in 1873, the great bubble burst. Hundreds of companies were ruined, and hundreds of thousands of investors were despoiled, either of a big part or of the whole of their fortune. At once the entire blame was fastened upon the Jews, who were denounced as exploiters, usurers, and swindlers. That Jews were largely represented among the Stock Exchange speculators was true, but it was also inevitable, since for more than a thousand years the State had confined the economic activities of the Jew to commerce. But they represented only a minority of the promoters involved in the scandal.

Popular feeling was inflamed by the publication of a sensational pamphlet, "Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanentum," by a hitherto unknown scribe, Wilhelm Marr, who demanded that the State should be a national unit comprising only individuals of the same racial origin. Marr argued that the heterogeneous elements should either be absorbed or eliminated. Such was the pseudo-scientific principle of the new Anti-Semitism. Shortly afterwards there appeared another sensational pamphlet, by Otto Glogau, violently attacking the Jews for their participation in the commercial scandals.

The political impetus to Anti-Semitism was supplied by Bismarck. Since 1877 the relations between Bismarck and the National Liberals had gradually become strained, after the leaders of this party, Lasker and Bamberger, had helped the Iron Chancellor to bring about the consolidation of the Empire. Bismarck now wanted the support of these leaders in his proposals for new taxes. Lasker and Bamberger replied by demanding the introduction of a constitutional and economic régime like that in England, and as Bismarck refused they led a powerful secession of National Liberals into opposition.

Bismarck was then compelled to seek a new majority among the Catholic and Conservative parties, and in order to wreak his revenge upon the "Judaised Liberals" he decided to make use of the convenient weapon supplied by Anti-Semitism. From 1878 Anti-Semitism became a distinct political programme. It was the first time in the history of a modern State that candidates sought election to Parliament on the ground of their enmity towards the Jews. The elections of that year resulted in an increase of Conservative members, and an attempt was made to win over the masses of the people to the Conservative programme by the foundation of the Christian Socialist Party.

The founder of this new party was the Court Preacher, Adolf Stöcker, who combined eloquence and energy with social influence. Under his maleficent direction, there began a campaign of abuse and hostility against the Jews, which made their so-called civil rights a mere mockery. Stöcker created his

Christian Socialism with a view to bringing the masses under the influence of the Church and using them for his nefarious policy. He had the support of Conservatives, Lutherans, and Ultramontanes, and with their combined aid violent onslaughts were made in the Prussian Diet against the Jews. A petition was even addressed to Bismarck praying for the exclusion of the Jews from the national schools and universities, and also from all public offices.

Stöcker found a powerful champion of his reactionary doctrines in the historian Treitschke, who, through his lectures at the Berlin University, was able to poison the minds of the academic youth against the Jewish people. In his pamphlet, "Ein Wort über unsere Juden," Treitschke spoke of the German Jews as "Polish youths engaged in the sale of trousers," and wrote: "In the circles of educated Germans, who would protest indignantly against the charge of religious or national intolerance, one single cry is heard, 'The Jews are our misfortune.' " The statements of Treitschke were actually referred to by Von Puttkamer, who was appointed Minister of Public Worship by Bismarck, as proof of the necessity of preserving the denominational character of public schools.

In the course of a debate in the Prussian Diet, Professor Virchow declared that the Anti-Semitic movement had received encouragement and material aid from the secret funds of the Government, which desired to see some Jewish deputies defeated. Treitschke was not the only academic champion of

Anti-Semitism. He was seconded by Eugen Dühring, a Socialist lecturer on philosophy, whose antipathy to all products of the Semitic spirit was so strong that he even attacked Christianity. The example set by these University luminaries found innumerable imitators. Even the semi-official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* indulged in Jew-baiting, and hence it was not surprising that every provincial paper engaged in the like sport.

But the attacks were not confined to pamphlets or the press. The Jews were soon subjected to petty persecutions and violent assaults. In many rural districts the roofs of their houses were removed, their fruit-trees were cut down, and their olive-yards and cornfields were laid waste. "In the small towns," says Professor Martin Philipppson, "the Jews found themselves boycotted in society, and often also in business. Officers and officials openly displayed Anti-Semitic papers, the students mocked and thrashed their Jewish comrades, proceedings which often led to duels; in gymnastic and veterans' societies the cry re-echoed: 'Out with the Jews!' Restaurants and hotels tried to attract the Anti-Semitic public by proclaiming themselves as *judenrein* (free from Jews). Many watering-places and health resorts made the stay of Jewish visitors impossible." *

These senseless attacks upon the Jews aroused a feeling of revulsion among the enlightened intellectual element, and a manifesto, signed by a number

* Prof. Martin Philipppson, *Neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. ii., pp. 17-18.

of illustrious men, including Mommsen, Gneist, Virchow, and Siemens, was published, denouncing Anti-Semitism as a blot on German culture and as a gross injustice to the Jews themselves. But so strong did the anti-Jewish feeling become that even Mommsen was swept away by it: he described the Jews as an element of decomposition and called upon them to shake off their characteristics and adopt Christianity.

On the other hand, Christian defenders of the Jews, whether dead or living, were exposed to bitter abuse. A movement to raise a statue to Lessing in Berlin was vigorously opposed by the Conservatives and Clerics, and the realisation of the project was long deferred. Similarly, the celebration of the seventieth birthday of Professor Virchow, who bravely championed the Jewish cause, aroused a strong counter-agitation among German students. The Prussian Government, which was repeatedly appealed to, said that it would protect the Jews in their constitutional rights, but it made liberal concessions to the Anti-Semites. Instigated by the Government, the Reichstag refused to grant Jewish ministers of religion the same privileges as were enjoyed by Christian ministers in regard to the discharge of military duty, whilst the Minister of Instruction, Von Puttkamer, refused to appoint Jews as teachers at higher grade schools.

In the leading university towns societies were formed by German students with a programme of active Anti-Semitism, and municipal elections too were soon vitiated by the same racial intolerance.

Personal insults of Jews in the streets, in restaurants, and cafés became the order of the day, leading to numerous duels, often with a fatal consequence. On New Year's Eve, 1881, a band of 500 Anti-Semitic rowdies rushed through the Jewish quarters in Berlin, committing outrages wherever they could. That these excesses did not become worse was solely due to the restraining influence exercised by the Socialist leaders, Bebel and Liebknecht, among the working classes.

The agitation was not by any means confined to the capital: it spread to all parts of Germany, and was particularly violent in Saxony. At a Church Conference in Thuringia a pastor declared that "the Jews must be rooted out with iron hooks." Military officers, civil officials, judges, university professors, all worked assiduously for the exclusion of Jews from their particular professions. Anti-Semitic outbreaks were treated by the police with a leniency that contrasted strangely with their attitude towards Socialist demonstrations. Lawyers regarded the prevalent feeling as a mitigating circumstance in anti-Jewish attacks, whilst the courts did not allow any Jewish body to prosecute in the name of the Jewish people. Life became so uncertain that many Jews left Berlin and Frankfort for safer districts.

Riots broke out in the east of Brandenburg, in Pomerania, and West Prussia. In Neustettin many Jews were assaulted and damage was done to houses and furniture; in Hammerstein the synagogue was damaged three times; and violent dis-

turbances occurred in a number of other places—Bublitz, Jastrow, Konitz, Falkenburg, Rummelsburg, Lauenburg, Polzin, Pollnow, Baldenburg, Schivelbein, and Stolp—causing hundreds of families to flee for refuge.

The Anti-Semites, realising their increasing strength, held their first “International Congress” in 1881 at Dresden. It was attended by 300 members, including Austrians, Hungarians, and Russians, and it resolved to issue a “Manifesto to the Governments and Peoples of the Christian States endangered by Judaism.” But the Congress and its Manifesto had no effect, because the pogroms in Russia had just broken out. That the origin of these massacres was to be traced to civilised Germany is admitted by even so cautious and dispassionate a historian as Professor Philippson, for he writes: “Even Germany, characterised by the whole world as the home of Anti-Semitism, did not remain unmoved by the horror aroused by these atrocities, for it indeed bore a good share of responsibility for their occurrence.”*

Owing partly to the reaction caused by the Russian pogroms, and partly to the differences among the Anti-Semites themselves, the Jews enjoyed a brief respite. The racial views of Marr and Treitschke, which were also adopted by Nietzsche, were unacceptable to Stöcker and his Christian Socialists, and hence, in March, 1881, two rival bodies were created, the “Deutscher Volksverein” and the “Sozialer Reichsverein.”

**Neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. ii., p. 29.

Five years later, at an Anti-Semitic Congress at Cassel, a reunion was effected under the name of "Deutscher Antisemitischer Verein," but in June, 1889, the Christian Socialists under Stöcker seceded again.

Not content with his success in Germany, Stöcker resolved to propagate his sinister gospel in England. He came to London in 1883 and wished to hold a meeting in the Mansion House, but the Lord Mayor declined the honour. Thereupon he organised a public meeting at the Memorial Hall (November 11th, 1883), but the opposition was so strong that the meeting had to be abandoned. Upon his return to the Fatherland, Stöcker continued his slanderous campaign, with the result that he was declared a perjurer by one of the courts in which he was prosecuted. But his followers were so lost to all sense of shame that they presented him with a consolation prize of 60,000 marks, and an Orthodox Church Conference actually addressed him in the words : " God Himself will heal the wound that you have sustained."

Yet, although Stöcker was publicly discredited, the Government took no steps to repress the agitation that he had brought into being. On the contrary, in all the German States the Jews were gradually excluded from all branches of the civil service, from a military career, and from the teaching profession. Petitions were also addressed to the Government to prohibit all Jewish immigration from Russia, and, although they were not directly granted, the Government agreed to exercise

strict supervision over the Russian refugees who arrived in large numbers in Germany. The Government discovered a long-forgotten law, from which it deduced the right to expel all foreigners employed by a Jewish community (October, 1884); and an edict issued in 1885 for the expulsion of all foreign Poles from the eastern provinces of Germany was undoubtedly aimed at the Russian Jews domiciled in those parts.

Moreover, various attempts were made to deprive the Jews of their constitutional rights, and motions were repeatedly brought forward, not only in the Reichstag, but in the Diets of the Federal States, to appoint commissions for the investigation and the translation of the Talmud and the "Shulchan Aruch" at the expense of the Government, and to cause the prohibition of "Shechita"—the Jewish ritual method of slaughtering. These proposals, which were all so reminiscent of the middle ages, had the support of many leading scholars and scientists. The historian Treitschke and the economist Adolf Wagner were joined in 1886 by the Orientalist Paul de Lagarde, who emphatically demanded the complete absorption of the Jews in the German State, or their wholesale exodus.

From 1887 Anti-Semitism entered upon a new and worse period of vilification. The Reichstag resounded with anti-Jewish denunciations from Stöcker and his coadjutors, Böckel and Liebermann von Sonnenberg. Anti-Semitic social gatherings were arranged, at which music was provided by

military bands, although these were not allowed to play at Radical meetings. Newspapers were founded for purely anti-Jewish purposes, supplemented by comic papers and caricatures. The accession of William II. brought another brief respite, but in June, 1889, a fresh campaign was opened by the Catholic *Germania* and the Conservative *Kreuzzeitung*. An Anti-Semitic Congress held at the same time at Bochum demanded that the Jews should be deprived of all State and commercial honours and offices and should also be excluded from the army. The position of the Jews was becoming more and more seriously undermined in the social and economic world: they were met everywhere with hatred and contempt. Their arch-enemy, Stöcker, was dismissed at the end of 1890 from the office of Court Preacher, not, however, because of his Anti-Semitism, but because of his presumptuous attitude towards the Imperial Family. But, though disgraced, Stöcker continued his savage campaign unabated.

A new agitator then arose in the person of Hermann Ahlwardt, a man of evil notoriety, who had been dismissed from his post as head of a school. An unscrupulous demagogue of the worst order, he outdid all his predecessors in sensationalism and violence. He issued a shoal of villainous pamphlets, and was repeatedly prosecuted for libel and convicted, but his influence only increased. In February, 1889, a band of 500 youths raided the streets in the south-east of Berlin, plundering wherever they could; amid wild shouts of "*Juden*

heraus!” (Out with the Jews). The State authorities connived at all anti-Jewish attacks, and hence it was not surprising that the President of the *Oberlandesgericht* (Supreme Court) of the Province of Silesia, in Breslau, issued an order in May, 1891, to the presidents of all courts in his jurisdiction, to exclude all Jews from their jury lists “except those who were suitable.” It was observed, moreover, that at the elections for the Prussian Diet, when the voting is public, all the officials, from the highest to the lowest, gave their suffrages to Anti-Semitic candidates. So threatening was the hostility becoming that early in 1891 a society was founded by a number of leading liberal-minded men for defence against anti-Semitism.

No sooner was this society founded than it had work to do. At Xanten, on the Lower Rhine, there was found, on June 29th, 1891, the body of a five-year-old boy with his throat cut. At once the old legend of ritual murder was resurrected. A Jewish butcher, Adolf Buschoff, was accused, and he and his family were imprisoned. But as nothing was proved they were released at the end of the year. A few months later Stöcker made an interpellation on the matter in the Prussian Diet, with the result that Buschoff was again arrested and tried. The verdict was an acquittal, but Buschoff and other Jews were compelled to leave Xanten. The next scandal was caused by a pamphlet of Ahlwardt, “*Judenflinten*,” in which he accused the armament firm of Ludwig Löwe of being bribed by the Alliance Israélite of Paris to deliver inferior guns to the Prussian Army,

so that the latter might be defeated in the next war of revenge. The falsity of the charge was proved by a Government official, but it was not until after thousands of copies of the pamphlet had been sold in the streets that it was confiscated, and Ahlwardt, after prosecution, was sentenced to five months' imprisonment.

"The savage war against the Jews," writes Professor Philippson, "raged everywhere in North Germany, threatened their honour and social position and even, especially in the small towns, their material existence. There had not been such happenings since the 'Hep, hep!' riots of seventy years before. At Christmas, 1892, tickets were distributed and stamps affixed everywhere with the inscription: 'Don't buy from Jews!' The personal mockery and maltreatment of individual Jews by Anti-Semitic roughs, among whom there were often so-called educated people, were the order of the day, and likewise the exclusion of Jews from social and athletic unions, and even from public and private appointments. Many bathing-resorts, especially on the Baltic coast and the North Sea, refused admission to Jewish visitors. Even before the majesty and the sorrow of death Anti-Semitism made no halt! Jewish funerals were scoffed at, Jewish cemeteries were desecrated by ruffians. Jewish houses were defiled with mire; obscene postcards—naturally anonymous—were sent to Jews. The shop windows of many booksellers and newspaper shops teemed with caricatures and lampoons against the Jews."*

* *Neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. ii., pp. 48, 49.

There appeared to be no limits to the excesses or the extravagance of the Jew-baiters. At a North-German Anti-Semitic Conference in Berlin, held on September 18th, 1893, and attended by a thousand persons, the State was called upon to confiscate Jewish capital, "as it had come only from robbery of the German people." In the following year the German Social Reform Party demanded in the Reichstag the abolition of "Shechita," the introduction of a religious oath in law courts, and the prohibition of the immigration of foreign Jews, but these demands were rejected. A sensation was caused soon after by the declaration of the Supreme Court of Justice in Germany (*Reichsgericht*) in Leipzig that all slanders against institutions of the Jewish religion were directed not against Judaism, but against the Jewish race, which did not enjoy legal protection, and this decision was naturally followed in the lower courts. Of a kindred nature was the declaration, made a few years later, by the Prussian Minister of Justice at the Diet (January 31st—February 1st, 1901), that the rule of the Constitution that the enjoyment of civil and State rights is independent of one's religious denomination does not hold for the Jews and is systematically ignored in regard to them by the Prussian Government. Three hundred Jewish communities in Prussia at once addressed a protest to the Minister-President, the Imperial Chancellor, von Bülow, but they were not even vouchsafed a reply.

The leaders of the Anti-Semitic party became more and more discredited owing to their evil lives,

but the seed they had sown could not be rooted out. One of the most remarkable figures among them was a demented Silesian nobleman, Count Pückler, who began a new crusade in Berlin, demanding the extermination of the Jews. The Count was repeatedly prosecuted and acquitted, until he was ultimately interned in a mad-house. The "ritual murder" scare was again raised in the '90s in various parts of North Germany, at Berent and Skurz (West Prussia), Königshütte (Upper Silesia), Übermatzhofen (Bavaria), etc., and everywhere the untruth of the accusation was conclusively proved. The most serious case was at Konitz (West Prussia), where, on March 11th, 1900, the mutilated body of a dissolute student, Ernst Winter, was found. A Jewish butcher, Israelski, was kept in prison five months until his innocence was proved, and his acquittal caused such a disturbance in the town that an infantry battalion had to clear the streets with bayonets. Even the declaration of the Ministers of Justice and of the Interior left the charge of "ritual murder" an open question.

Sufficient evidence has already been advanced to show that, although Anti-Semitism was conducted as a political party, its tenets were fully approved by the German Government; and it was for the express purpose of safeguarding the rights granted to them by the Constitution that the Jews of Germany, in 1892, founded the "Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens," and, in 1904, the "Verband der deutschen Juden." Thanks to the efforts of these two bodies, the Anti-Semitic

party, as a party, has lost its influence ; but Anti-Semitism is just as rampant as ever among the Conservatives and the National Liberals, among the landed aristocracy and military circles. Before the war no Jew might receive a commission in the army, and he was even denied the trifling honour of becoming a lieutenant of the reserve ; and although, since the war, commissions have had to be conferred upon some Jewish soldiers, to fill the gaps in the ranks of officers, there is no guarantee that the holders will be permitted to retain them after the war.

Similarly, the civil service is still rigorously barred to the Jews, and although Jews distinguish themselves so highly at the universities they are denied an ordinary professorship—unless they accept baptism. Even the famous Professor Ehrlich had to be content with an extraordinary professorship. The anti-Jewish feeling at the seats of learning is so strong that Jews are not admitted to the regular students' corps or unions and have, therefore, founded their own.

The Anti-Semitism of the Government is not confined to native Jews but is equally extended to Jews from other countries. Foreign Jews who have long been resident in the country are refused naturalisation, without any reason being assigned. Only a year before the outbreak of the war a remarkable movement began at all the leading German universities for the exclusion of Russo-Jewish students, who were thus compelled to migrate to Switzerland, Italy, and other countries.

“ Can the leopard change his spots ? ” It would be hazardous, indeed, to believe that Germany, which is so saturated with the Anti-Semitic virus, will emerge from the war a liberal and enlightened country. The recent suggestion that, in the reformation of the Prussian Upper House, provision should be made for the inclusion of some eminent Jewish representatives was indignantly spurned. This reactionary attitude is typical of the German State, which, despite all its vaunted civilisation, continues to maintain a policy of intolerance and hostility towards its Jewish subjects.